

95
5
LETTERS FROM "MAX"
AND
MR. GRANVILLE-BARKER

SEP 3 1925

PRICE 6d. net.
MONTHLY

DRAMA

New Series

APRIL 'M·CM·XXIII

Number 27



COSTUME DESIGN BY PAUL SHELING OF
THE BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE

Issued by the BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE, a Federation of Societies and other Organizations working for the Development of the Drama. Individual Membership is also open to all who are concerned with the practice or enjoyment of the Art of the Theatre, and may be acquired by payment of the Annual Subscription of £1 ls., entitling the Member to all privileges of the League, including the free receipt of the League's Monthly Magazine. Full particulars from the Hon. Sec.,
10 KING STREET COVENT GARDEN, LONDON, W.C.

The Citizen House Players

of Bath have a large number of

STAGE DRESSES

made of the best materials and designed in their own studios which they would be glad to loan to members of the British Drama League ONLY at the nominal cost of five shillings upwards.

The range of dresses includes Celtic, Saxon, Mediæval, Shakespearian, Eighteenth Century and Fantastic.

It is desired to limit the loan of dresses for such plays as shall be of a definitely artistic and educational character, and in no way do the costumes partake of the nature of "fancy dress."

Colour, line, design and especial lighting effects have been studied in the making of the dresses, many of which incorporate valuable brocades, hand embroideries and peasant stitchery. Complete sets of curtains for stage-surroundings may also be obtained.

Application for loan of these dresses to members of the Drama League should be made in the first instance to the Hon. Sec. of the Drama League, 10 King Street, Covent Garden, W.C. 2.

"MAX," MR GRANVILLE-BARKER AND THE NATIONAL THEATRE

Mr. Max Beerbohm has recently been invited, together with some others, to sign a statement agreeing in principle to the establishment of a Shakespeare National Theatre. We are glad to be able to publish Mr. Beerbohm's letter and Mr. Granville-Barker's reply to it.

Villino Chiaro, Rapallo, Italy
February 19 1923

Dear Lord Howard
My dear W. A.
My dear Harley
Dear Mr. Whitworth

It is good of

you to wish to have my signature to the document which you send me. And my instinct is always to sign anything. But I do much prefer signing something that seems likely to lead to something. And what, oh what, is this document of yours likely to lead to? You reply that it is a preliminary to sending round the same old hat to the same dear old public for the same dear old notion of a National Theatre. But what will *that* lead to? What did it lead to in the years when England was wallowing in money? It led to £70,000 from Carl Meyer; and, from other people, enough to keep you going in postage stamps, note-paper, printing, etc. In these lean years what would it lead to?—except general boredom all round, and perhaps a serious overdraft at your bank for postage-stamps, etc. The impoverished British public won't pay now for what it felt no need of when it had some money to spare. The ennobling discipline of poverty has not, alas, fixed the public eye on those upper radiant clouds behind which, no doubt, a complete National Theatre is lurking. And you surely aren't quite so mad as to suppose that H.M.'s Government is going to help you in any way? It wouldn't dare, even if it could be got to care. No hope in *that* direction.

I would advise you to save printing expenses, and go quietly to work with pen and ink, or (cheaper still) by word of mouth, among the few rich people that England still has; paying special attention to those of them who have either very beautiful souls or a great desire for present and posthumous

advertisement. And after the failure of this modest campaign, you might well try America, where the wealth is very vast, and the beauty of soul equalled only by the love of advertisement, and pity for poor old England very widespread, I believe.

But it was my signature that you asked for, not my advice. And I ask all your four pardons for supplying the wrong article.

Yours { sincerely
affectionately
affectionately
sincerely
MAX BEERBOHM.

MR. GRANVILLE-BARKER'S REPLY.

MY DEAR MAX,—

Your letter has alarmed the Drama League, which—let me tell you—is not easily alarmed. Whitworth sends it to me to answer. Why should I; alone and unaided by my fellow-recipients? If it comes to that, why should not Whitworth answer it? Why should not Howard de Walden answer you in Welsh, of which language he is a master? (And that would stump you, I think. Have you a Welsh dictionary at Rapallo? I doubt it). Why should not Archer—but here I pause. Archer, as we know, is terrible when roused. And your letter will rouse him. He is in America. He will immediately return; and I shudder to think of your fate. He may even publicly caricature you. Well, my poor friend, I will at least step between you and the Archer to come.

Even so I don't see why I should answer more than a quarter of the letter. And I will choose my quarter: I will take that little bit over the page which contains the sentence—"The impoverished British public won't pay now for what it felt no need of when it had money to spare."

You have (need I say it!) an unerring finger for a weak spot, and here you seem to touch a very weak one. Ten years ago I could have found no answer; and now—paradoxically—I almost wish I could find none. I should have said then, "Of course Max is right. The thing isn't practical politics." Or practical economics rather. For I was brought up, as you were, to believe that nations, like individuals, could only afford to spend a little less than they earned. But have we not, for these last ten years, seen Europe achieving the economically impossible? And do you not see now, mirrored in your Mediterranean, the most logically-minded nations of Europe pursuing the economically idiotic? Certainly England is a little out of this picture for the moment. She—still under the influence of the people who brought us up—has returned to the arithmetic of commonsense and to the budgetting (*absit omen* however!) of Mr. Micawber. But there are signs that this reaction has gone as far as it will. Do you not notice, Max, as you read the Financial articles in *The Times* and *Spectator*, how quite solemn economists begin to tell us that this business of making the pound look the dollar in the face, etc., is all nonsense? As I say, I am sorry; for the very simplest arithmetic is all I shall ever master, and I begin to wonder what on earth, as a voter, I ought to do about it. These things are indeed too high for me; besides being—as you may be thinking—too gradiose for this letter and its subject. One lesson however, the most ignorant of us may extract from them. When a nation wants a thing which it is in its power to make or take, lack of money will never stand in its way.

So here is my quarter of an answer to you. Before the war there was money enough available in England for a hundred National Theatres. But nobody wanted one. I except the few fanatics—like myself—who were wont to lash themselves furiously, and the public, when they could, in the cause.

But now there does really seem to be a want. Wherefore—paradoxical, impossible, immoral (to us!) as it must appear—I don't believe that when the want has found a little more expression, there will be the

smallest difficulty about the money. It is, highly probable, indeed, that before bath-chairs finally claim us, you and I will find ourselves sitting (together I trust) in those stalls. No, I forgot; there will be no free seats. We shall be in the pit.

Yours always,

HARLEY GRANVILLE-BARKER.

11.3.23.

BOURNVILLE DRAMATIC SOCIETY.

The Bournville Dramatic Society, whose acting members represent all grades of workers at Cadbury Bros.' Works, set the seal on eleven years' hard work by two excellent performances of Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing" last month.

The policy of the society has been to study plays rather than give entertainments, and with a few exceptions, its productions have consisted of staged readings—generally speaking every other week during the winter months. Recently, however, the erection of a well-equipped stage on modern lines has given the members the opportunity to attempt more ambitious things. Notable successes in the past have been Drinkwater's "Cophetua," Yeat's "Dierdre," Barrie's "The Will," Lady Gregory's "Hyacinth Halvey," Evrenov's "A Merry Death," and Lennox Robinson's "The White-Headed Boy," but its "readings" (given on an impromptu stage with curtains) have ranged from "Hamlet" to "The Skin Game," "Man and Superman" to "The Cassilis Engagement"—in all, some 130 plays of various kinds.

"Much Ado About Nothing" was chiefly notable for three excellent pieces of characterisation—the Beatrice of Dorothy Wright, the Benedick of Albert Southern, and the Dogberry of Norman P. Booth—and the very effective costumes and stage decorations designed by Paul B. Redmayne. By a judicious use of a double apron the play was given almost without a cut. The music by a composer contemporary with Shakespeare, Giles Farneby, together with Stevens's setting of "Sigh no more, ladies," and Arne's setting of "Pardon, Goddess" (arranged by another member, Ernest H. Keen) added greatly to the enjoyment of the performance.

A NEW SYSTEM OF STAGE LIGHTING AT THE ST. MARTIN'S THEATRE

By Hugh Gee

MR. BASIL DEAN has been lucky enough to persuade his backers to allow him to install the Schwabe-Hasait system of lighting at the St. Martin's Theatre, and on Thursday, the 9th of March, he very kindly asked those interested in the future of the theatre to a demonstration of its possibilities. The system consists of a curved "back cloth," or "artificial horizon" used in conjunction with an extremely powerful battery of light boxes which is suspended behind the top of the proscenium arch. In a scene where the "artificial horizon" is used, it is nearly always necessary to have some form of built-up "ground row" at the back of the stage to hide the join between "earth and sky," and when this is so, another battery of lights, arranged to shine upwards, is placed on the stage behind this. By means of a clever combination of reflectors these lights cast no visible beams and the "flooding" of the "background" is perfectly even.

One of the most striking advantages of this system is the extremely natural way colour changes can be accomplished; the range of colours were unlimited, and the gradual blending and changing was perfectly done. The main feature of the installation was the cloud apparatus. This instrument, which is hung above the stage with the other lights, might well be termed "God's paint brush," for by means of it God (in this case a most nimble-witted electrician), can at will waft fleecy clouds of the alto-cumulus formation across a pale dawn-tinted sky, or hurl a heaving mass of cloud, luminous and full of stormy portent, over a sky so grey and sullen that it seems to hide most awful unknown things. . . . He can bring forth the rain (not very well), the rainbow (beautifully), the stars, and the snow, and I am sure he could produce an aurora borealis if he tried. So you see what a useful instrument this would be to Mr. Arthur Collins at Drury Lane. Whether this particular part of the installation will help such a modern producer as Mr. Basil Dean, remains to be seen.

The cloud machine and its attendant projectors do, as a matter of fact, open up

an entirely new field in the decorative art of the theatre, because *any* colour form can be thrown on to the background (it is only a matter of slides), and these can be moving or still. Landscapes or seascapes can appear and these can be as quaint and modern as the producer wishes.

One feature of the installation, which I consider every theatre should install forthwith, is the Hasait cloth, a very beautifully arranged horizon or "cyclorama" cloth which is electrically controlled. Its position is in a vertical roll at one side of the proscenium arch and when the "God" at the switchboard presses his button it glides gently round its permanent rod which is set high under the "grid." This cloth is dazzling white and as far as one can tell is without seam or crease. It has the effect of changing a very small stage into a limitless space. Its installation in all theatres, especially provincial ones, would solve a great part of the question of touring scenery, because with it so very little else is needed for any outdoor set. However, the cyclorama is by no means new, but it is so often badly put up and unless arranged to roll away like the Hasait cloth, is very much in the way of setting ordinary scenes.

The tremendous objection to the installation is its price, but I suppose that would not affect a large theatre and unfortunately there are no small experimental theatres yet to be catered for. Anyway, I hope that when one is started, Messrs. the General Electric Company (the agents for the system) will see what they can do for it.

It was an unfortunate loophole for criticism that during the demonstration no use was made of the front lighting when showing the cloud effects, owing to lack of time for rehearsal, as Mr. Basil Dean explained; for delightful as the pictures all were, scenes cannot be in silhouette all the time. We should very much like to have seen if the cloud and background lighting effects were materially affected by the use of "floats" or the circle lights. However, Mr. Basil Dean is to be congratulated on being so very enterprising, for he has not only one but two complete systems of modern lighting in his theatre.



THE JOURNAL OF
THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

President:
LORD HOWARD DE WALDEN.

Chairman of the Council:
H. GRANVILLE-BARKER.

Hon. Secretary: GEOFFREY WHITWORTH.
Hon. Treasurer: ROBERT MOND.

MSS. for publication in DRAMA will be considered if accompanied by stamps for return if unsuitable. All Enquiries should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, at the Offices of the League, 10, King Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C.2.

Telephone: GERRARD 8011.

Neither the Editor nor the Drama League as a whole accepts any responsibility for the opinions expressed in signed articles printed in this Journal.

THE death of Sarah Bernhardt removes one more of the great figures which dominated the stage of the later nineteenth century—the stage of Europe and of America. The art of Bernhardt was not of the quality now inculcated by the more modern school of producers. She was, frankly, out to dominate and to “exploit” a personality which in any walk of life must have made its mark. But on the stage she found a perfect medium, and it will be a sad day if the theatre becomes so constricted in its aim as to deny expression to such vital and richly endowed temperaments. At the obsequies of this great artist in Paris, Mr. James K. Hackett represented the British Drama League. He offered there our tribute as part of the whole English-speaking world.

A correspondent writes to us concerning the successful effort made by a small producing society in the provinces in selling printed copies of the plays at the performance. This is a practice which might well be followed universally. It should be possible to obtain the plays on sale or return from

the Publishers, and even half a dozen copies sold would mean some advantage to the author concerned, besides the spread of an intelligent appreciation of his work.

The recent production of four scenes from Mr. Laurence Housman's “Little Plays of St. Francis,” by the St. Alphege Players at the Kensington Parish Room, was a remarkable instance of the value of these plays and of their wonderful suitability for amateur acting. The difficulty of the plays may appear insuperable on a casual reading, but they have that quality of inspiration which is so helpful to the amateur. The St. Alphege Players were evidently carried away from self-consciousness and nervousness, and in the Leper scene, at any rate, gave one of the most moving and effective performances that could be imagined. It is to be hoped that the St. Alphege Players will give more of the St. Francis cycle, and that other Societies will follow their example.

In celebration of the Tercentenary of the First Folio, the London Shakespeare League has arranged a Special Memorial Service to the Editors, Heminge and Condell, to take place on April 21st next. The service will include an address by His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, and will be held in the presence of the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs of London. A few spare tickets may be available to members of the Drama League, and those who wish to be present should apply to Miss Lilian Simpson (secretary), at 70 Lissenden Mansions, N.W.5.

A performance of Euripides' “Hippolytus,” translated by Mr. Gilbert Murray, will be given by the Stoneland Players, at the Mary Ward Settlement, Tavistock Place, at 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 28th. Further performances will be given on June 9th, 13th and 15th, in the barn at Stonelands, West Hoathly, Sussex.

The article, “A Note from Cologne,” in last month's issue, was written by Miss Barbara Morley Horder. We regret that the name was incorrectly printed.

"SOMERSET AND THE DRAMA"

Reviewed by Blanche M. Rogers

Somerset and the Drama. By S. R. Littlewood and others. (No. 7. 2s. 2d. post free. Somerset Folk Press, 16, Harpur Street, London, W.C.1).

ALL Somerset folk, and all lovers of drama, who have not already secured a copy of "Somerset and the Drama," No. 7 of the Somerset Folk Series, should not fail to make good their omission. This little book of articles, by well known and interesting writers, shows clearly that Somerset is in the van of the great urge of dramatic expression.

S. R. Littlewood, in the introductory article, summarizes the contributions of the other writers with a sincere and sure touch, and shows what the English stage owes to Somerset, from a classic standpoint, in the Sheridan and Siddons' period of the Bath stage, with all its brilliance; the romantic side expressed by that great son of Somerset, Sir Henry Irving, and the Folk Drama, which has been given new and vigorous life in the work of the "Bath Citizen Players," and the Glastonbury Folk Festival Players. "A drama which is individual in creation, universal in expression, local in association and performance." The article finishes on a note, which all true lovers of drama can be agreed upon, that pure drama promotes the happiness of the people, either in civic or rural life.

D. M. Carey writes fascinatingly of "Mediaeval Mysteries and Modern Mummers," and gives much interesting matter and food for thought. In his summing up he shows without question that the fount of inspiration of the higher forms of modern dramatic art has come from the old moralities.

In "The Ebb and Flow of Drama," Harold Downs makes a most admirable survey of a very big subject. In the space of a short article, which he acknowledges is bound to be limited, he gives an enormous amount of information of a most absorbing kind, including the wonderful educational work being done by "Citizen

House," a description which will make all interested in such movements inquire further into the work being done by Miss de Reyes. The Bath Playgoers, of whom Mr. Downs is the energetic Secretary, are shown to be doing most valuable work, and their enthusiasm will do much to foster the drama in its educative and recreative aspect, and will be one of the forces from the outside which will help "in that reform of the theatre which is so long overdue."

Henry Irving is a name to conjure with, and Austin Brereton makes us long to know more of this unique personality. He not only gives a sketch of his life, but those intimate touches which make one realize the strength and virility of character which accompanied the genius of this great actor: 671 parts, certainly a stupendous record! "When such a man as this has gained a large share in the guidance of the stage, the world may well feel that the theatre is an instrument of vast, varied and beneficent power." Mr. Brereton speaks of his having the tenderness of a child; the writer who was present at the luncheon at Bristol in 1904, of which he writes, and who had the privilege of talking with him on that occasion, was immensely impressed by this trait in his character. Tenderness, high courtesy and reverence seemed to emanate from him, coupled with great dignity of bearing. It was an experience never to be forgotten and bears out what the writer so beautifully expresses in this sympathetic and appreciative article.

All who have had the great fortune to hear and see the "Immortal Hour," by Rutland Boughton, will read with avidity his account of the Glastonbury Festival movement. The record of the work done at Glastonbury and other places, from 1914 to 1922, the number of performances given, operas, plays, ballets, concerts, will be a revelation to those who have no personal knowledge of the enthusiasm, the indefatigable energy, and consummate ability of the composer of the "Immortal Hour." Notable people in the musical, literary and

artistic world, have written of the enormous value of these performances, from the educational and artistic standpoint, which has enabled the people of a small country town to be given the sense of sound, colour and movement, which nothing else could have given them in the same way. You read the account breathlessly, astonished at what Mr. Boughton has accomplished, and are seized with an overwhelming desire to take part in this renaissance of simple beauty. Without doubt seeds are being sown, which one day will bear a fruitful harvest, in the great field of artistic endeavour.

Last, but in no manner least, is the article by John Read, dealing with "Somerset Dialect Plays and Players." All interested in the work of Cecil Sharp will read this delightful account of Folk Dance, Folk Lore, Folk Song and Folk Play, with added interest. The writer makes a strong plea for the retention of this mode of basic expression and says "The extensive possibilities of the English Dialects as vehicles for dramatic work have been grossly

neglected." The account of the "Camel Play-Actors," must be read to be appreciated, it is so full of humour. The references to Somersetshire dialect in Shakespeare and other plays is absorbingly interesting and shows the writer a master of his subject. One cannot help sharing his sadness that more has not been done "by a judicious cultivation of the folk-spirit to develop the interest of the countryman in his environment and his rich heritage of lore and song and to retain the subtly charming atmosphere of old English country life."

The Appendix to the book gives a good summary of the work being done in the county. One recognizes that it must necessarily be restricted, but as Bristol is included, a rather fuller list of the activities should have been given, such as the Bristol Amateur Operatic Society, The Orpheus Glee and Madrigal Societies, The Medical Dramatic Club, The British Empire Shakespeare Society (one of the oldest branches), The Poetry Society, and the recently formed "Folk House Players."

NEWS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH

A STUDIO THEATRE.

BY BASIL MAINE.

AT the beginning of this year a novel and wholly delightful performance was given of two myths, played in mime and dance, at Mrs. Spencer Watson's Studio Theatre, at 170 Warwick Road. The two myths were "The Argonauts" and "Pan and Syrinx," and both were played in four scenes and accompanied by harp, oboe, flute and two clear-voiced singers—Gluck and Douglas Marshall, the latter being also responsible for the musical direction and stage-management. The musicians played and sang from a chamber above the stage and hidden from the audience, which gave the music a strangely remote and illusionary effect. For the "Argonauts" flute music had been chosen and effectively transcribed, and the scenes were connected by a reader raised on a pedestal to the right of the stage. This reader was Mr. John Armstrong, who was also responsible for the curtain panels of "The Talking Oak" and "The Dragon

Serpent," both effective inventions by reason of their extreme simplicity.

For "Pan and Syrinx," the music was Early Italian. With all their *naïveté*—and in a great measure because of this quality—the performances struck an exact mean. The various arts employed—singing, playing, dancing, miming, speaking and design—gave themselves in service to the achievement of unity: there was no attempt at usurpation and no tyranny and so there was obtained adjustment and balance which were nearer to perfection than the total effect of more elaborate and conventional productions. The music was rendered by singers and players alike in that impersonal way which is essential for its right understanding.

In recalling the performance, I am especially reminded of the harp playing of Miss Gwendolen Nason, and of Miss Elsa Lancaster (who devotes herself to a Children's Theatre in Charlotte Street), Miss Dorothy Mulloch (a woodcut artist), and Mrs. Helen Allen, for their grace of movement.

Mrs. Spencer Watson not only proved herself well-equipped in the art of miming and dancing, but also in the art of teaching them. To all her players it was clear that she imparted her sense of fitness. I was convinced that the work done at this Studio Theatre will take its own important place in the scheme of dramatic things, even if it is comparatively unknown. Such work is the secret leaven without which the lump would become disintegrated. Children are taken at their most impressionable age and taught to make public appearance gracefully and without self-consciousness—that is to say they (at least those of them who are not waysiders) are endowed with the rarest of all senses—the “stage-sense”—and moreover at the period of their lives which makes it impossible for them ever to lose it; so that even if we are not wise enough in our own generation to acknowledge the benefit of “Chamber Drama” it will not be long before its influence will be visible on every side. In that time the importance of a centre such as the theatre in Warwick Road, will be fully recognized, for there are cultivated an eye and an ear for beauty, a taste for simplicity, and a talent for gainly movement, things which are rarely met with in present-day dramatic art.

SALI LOBEL SCHOOL.

On March 9th last, at the Arlington Club, Miss Sali Löbel (Principal of the Sali Löbel School, Manchester) gave and illustrated a most interesting lecture on the History of Dancing.

Having traced the development of dancing from its origin in primitive man's first attempts at artistic expression to its achievement of definite form, she gave as examples of ancient local types the Hebrew dance of Miriam, an Egyptian, a Greek, and a Roman dance, and then proceeded to the Folk dancing of the British Isles, giving as illustration no less than four variations of the hornpipe. She then sketched a brief outline of the growth of the modern ballet, pointing her remarks in the same delightful fashion, and ended a lecture, as strenuous for herself as it was illuminating to her audience, with a charming example of the gipsy dancing of her native Roumania.

ST. ANDREW'S.

On March 10th, at the University Hall, St. Andrew's, the St. Andrew's 1920 Club presented three one-act plays—“The Pub at Ballyaughlis” (Richard Rowley), “How He Lied to Her Husband” (Shaw), and “Me and my Diary” (Gertrude Jennings).

The fact that this was the first production of “The Pub at Ballyaughlis” made the programme especially interesting, while an able performance of the part of the Strolling Fiddler, on which the play largely depends, ensured the success of the most important item.

THE LONDON POLYTECHNIC.

On January 30th, members of the Polytechnic School of Speech Training and Dramatic Art gave two performances of Murray's translation of Euripides' “Trojan Women.” The Principal of the School, Miss Louie Bagley, was responsible for a noteworthy production.

The chief parts were played with great feeling and exceptionally clear enunciation. Miss Angela Doubleday (whose part in the second performance was taken by Miss Hilda Scarlett), as Hecuba succeeded in holding the audience by the dignity of her bearing even during the moments of monotony which marred an otherwise excellent performance of a very heavy part. Miss Millicent Reed had caught the spirit of Euripides' Cassandra and made her a pathetic as well as an eerie figure, and Miss Margery Allingham (who had also designed the dresses) was especially effective in her final scene with Astyanax. The spirit with which all these players entered into their parts was noticeable also in the less important members of the caste, and the occasional weakness of the chorus was more than excused by the fact that rehearsals had had to be severely curtailed.

LECTURE ON SPANISH DRAMA.

On March 26th, by kind permission of the Director of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, Mr. W. Starkie, Professor of Spanish Literature at Trinity College, Dublin, gave a most interesting lecture on “Tendencies of Modern Spanish Drama.” His Excellency the Spanish Ambassador presided.

THE MEXBOROUGH AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY.

Most readers of DRAMA will not have visited the ugly quarter of South Yorkshire, of which quarter Mexborough is the sink. Yet in this squalid metropolis of miners and steel workers, "The Merry Wives" has been produced in the local Hippodrome, for six nights, by the local Amateur Dramatic Society. This is the third year of the Society and the fifth production has maintained a reputation which has become considerably widespread in the Don Valley.

The play was given by a group of young people, many of them keen students of the drama and of Shakespeare. When we say that some of the members were thoroughly conversant with the "Old Vic." production, and with Mr. Fagan's magnificent settings for "Henry IV" at the Court Theatre, they can claim to be introducing no trifling or ludicrous performances. The cast was admirably chosen. Falstaff was undertaken by Mr. W. Popple, who in girth and understanding was capable of playing the part of the pitiful rascal with gusto, yet so as to suggest the half sad longing for the bygone days when he was master joker and not the master joke.

The stage designing would *not* have been approved by the enthusiasts of the "Phoenix Society," but here we had to compromise and sugar our pill. You cannot translate a sober South Yorkshire citizen into a "curtain and colour" expert in a week.

The Society is quite conscious of its mission and opportunities and every advantage will be taken to perform the greatest English plays with an increasing finish in design and artistic interpretation.

ZODIAC DRAMATIC CLUB (STREATHAM).

The Zodiac Dramatic Club gave a representation of "Milestones" at the Streatham Town Hall recently. This is, I believe, the first amateur performance of that interesting play in this country, and considerable credit is due to the amateur who dares to undertake a production from which many professionals would shrink.

The play opened under the most adverse conditions. An Arctic gale was blowing

through the hall; every available door and window was open; the heating apparatus was apparently on strike. Through all this the money changers carried on their chaffering in the outer courts and two inaudible ladies conversed in dumb show on the stage. However, it is only fair to say that our early fears were not realized.

In the first act, rather more difference between the dress of the three young men would have been desirable, and a tendency to drag was noticeable in the last act. The lighting of the stage was well done.

Mr. Stanley C. Parker was good as John Rhead, though not always consistent in his rendering of the character and perhaps over-deliberate in the last act. Miss Vera Pratt gave a very charming portrait of a mid-Victorian wife—it must have been a good thing to be a husband in those days!—and Miss Dora Griffiths contributed an excellent character study of Gertrude Rhead, by no means an easy part. Mr. Clifford Medwin scored a success in the partly humorous part of Ned Pym. Mr. Gordon Medwin hardly brought out the pig-headed obstinacy of Sam Sibley sufficiently in the first act, though in the second he was more effective. In general, after the opening scene the enunciation was good, and the performance reflected considerable credit on both actors and producers.

NORTH LONDON GROUP.

The North London Group beg to announce their production of "Ye Gods," a farce in three acts, by Stephen Robert and Eric Hudson, on Saturday, April 14th next, at 7.30 p.m., at the Northern Polytechnic, Holloway Road, N. Tickets, price 3s. 6d., 2s. 4d., and 1s. 10d. reserved, and 1s. 3d. unreserved (all inclusive of tax), may be obtained from Miss A. Noble, 54 Mildmay Road, N.1.

GUILDHOUSE PLAYERS.

The Guildhouse Players (the Dramatic Society of the Fellowship Guild) are giving a performance of Laurence Housman's "Chinese Lantern," on April 17th and 18th, at the Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. Admission free. Silver collection.

M. A. LANE, Hon. Sec.

Costumes & Designs

TOM HESLEWOOD, Ltd.

TOM HESLEWOOD MRS. H. B. IRVING HUGH MILLER

16 WILSON ST., LONG ACRE, W.C.2

Costumes for London and Provincial
production.

Amateur Theatricals and Fancy
Dress Balls.

PLAYS DRESSED FROM STOCK

Special terms and attention to members of the
BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

Tube Station:—Covent Garden (2 minutes)

Telephone:— — — 4432 Gerrard

The Greenleaf Theatre

*A Travelling School for Author,
Actor and Producer*

Directors:

Constance Smedley Armfield Maxwell Armfield

ANNUAL SUMMER SCHOOL

July 28th to Sept. 1st

at Ellingham, Ringwood, Hants
(New Forest)

Offers an efficient training in elements of Synthetic Drama, amongst ideal surroundings, culminating in actual production. No previous experience necessary. Writing of a recent demonstration of work studied at the Summer School of 1922, the *Bournemouth Graphic* says: "Striking examples of what could be achieved by simple setting and a rhythmic basis, combined with excellent colour-sense. . . . The dramatic simplicity of the poses . . . were quite fine and convincing. One gets back to the very heart of things with the Greenleaf Players, their costume and scenery and eloquence of gesture and voice, make their visit a pleasant memory."

Detailed circular of courses, etc. from—

The Secretary,

Greenleaf Theatre, c/o Brown's Library,
Ringwood, Hants

Dramatic Art Centre

MARY WARD SETTLEMENT,
TAVISTOCK PLACE, W.C.1

Summer Term opens APRIL 18th.

Classes in Elocution, Acting,
Play Production, etc.

SPECIAL SATURDAY CLASS FOR CHILDREN

SUMMER SCHOOL, August 1st-15th.

Fortnightly Course:

"Dramatic Art as an Educational Subject."

Weekly Course:

"Play Production for Amateurs."

BOARD RESIDENCE IF DESIRED.

Apply (with stamp) Miss MAUDE SCOTT, Director.

The 2nd Production

of the

DRAMATIC ART CENTRE REPERTORY COMPANY

will take place

in their THEATRE HALL at the

Mary Ward Settlement, Tavistock Pl., W.C.1
on April 25th and 26th at 8 p.m.

"SISTER BEATRICE"

by M. Maeterlinck, and

"A ROYAL AUDIENCE"

a New Egyptian Play by Terence Gray, produced
under the archaeological supervision of the author.

TICKETS: 4/9 & 2/4 from the Director (Museum 337)

OF SPECIAL INTEREST to ALL AMATEURS

BOOK EARLY

Note:—Applications for Membership of this Company should be sent in now to be in time for the Autumn productions.

THE DRAMA LEAGUE LIBRARY

Now contains plays by most of the prominent
Dramatists of the day, printed and in manuscript.

COMPLETE ACTORS' SETS OF PLAYS

Presented to the League
by Miss Horniman, and

BOOKS on the ART and HISTORY of the THEATRE

The Books may be borrowed free by
Members of the League. Sets of Parts
are lent, for production purposes, at a
fee of 5s. for a period of six weeks,
or 2s. 6d. for one week only.

For further particulars apply to the
Hon. Secretary, BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE,
10 King Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C.2.

